"those enduring matinee idols"

A CHRONOLOGICAL LOOK AT SOUND SERIALS (1929 - 1956)

CHAPTER 18
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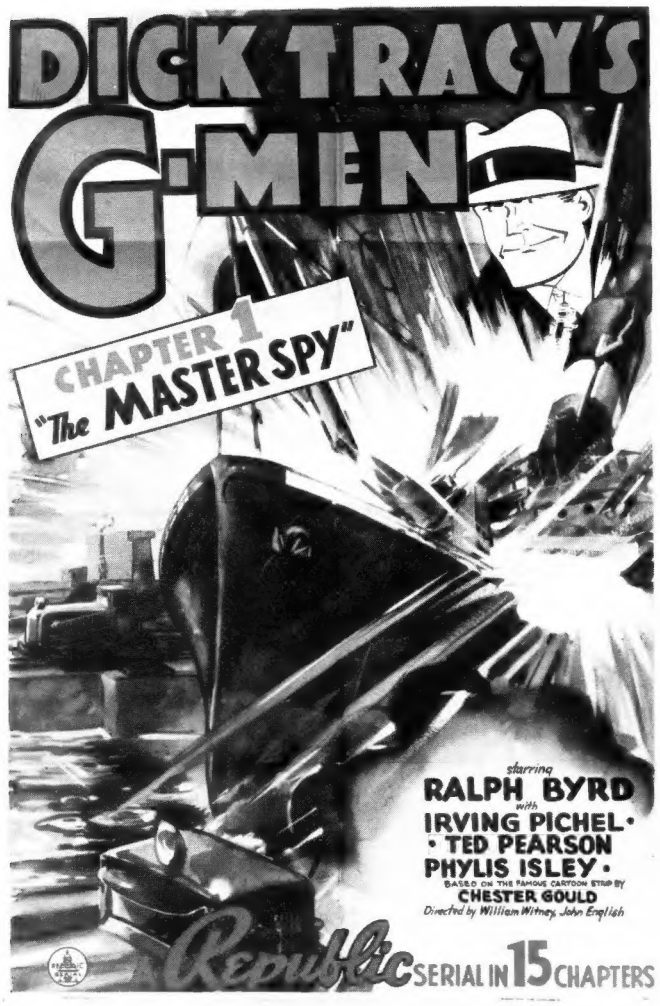
MASTHEAD: BATMAN (Lewis Wilson) and THE PHANTOM (Tom Tyler), Columbia Serials Released in 1943.



Written for TEMI By
ERIC HOFFMAN / BOB MALCOMSON

Photos from the Collections of C.M. Parkhurst,
Jim Stringham and Bob Malcomson

DICK TRACY'S G-MEN, the third serial to commemorate the heroics of the comic strip sleuth created by Chester Gould, was released by Republic Pictures on September 2, 1939. Some early promotional material called the chapter play "Dick Tracy and His G-Men."

Production credits were identical to the previous, and excellent, Republic release, DAREDEVILS OF THE RED CIRCLE (pg. 234): Producer — Robert Beche; Original Screen Play — Barry Shipman, Franklyn Adreon, Rex Taylor, Ronald Davidson and Sol Shor; Directors — William Witney and John English. William Lava contributed another action musical score which would pop up in part in later serials; for example, THE CRIMSON GHOST in 1946.

Ralph Byrd confirmed that he was the ***only*** Tracy imaginable for the screen. But what really raised G-MEN a notch above the two earlier Tracys was its chief heavy Zarnoff, portrayed by Irving Pichel.

Pichel had already distinguished himself not only as a character actor, but also as a director — including the Merian C. Cooper production "She" (1935), a film classic. Later he handled the then 31-year-old Orson Wells in "Tomorrow is Forever" (1946). This was an out-and-out soap opera, but superbly done.

As an actor, Pichel proved he was suited to play bizarre roles. One example was his menacing, liver-lipped servant, Sandor, in "Dracula's Daughter" (1936). He was a perfect choice for Zarnoff. His satanic features were heightened by a moustache and goatee.

Dick Tracy's aides had been reduced by two: Junior left and so did the bungling idiot Mike McGurk, but Steve Lockwood and Gwen Andrews remained. Ted Pearson was Steve while 20-year-old Phylis Isley was cast as Gwen — a role so minor it could have been easily eliminated. Miss Isley did not really hit her stride as an actress until she brought to life the mystic peasant girl in "Song of Bernadette" (1943) under the name of Jennifer Jones. When G-MEN was re-issued (9/19/55), Republic changed her credits on all advertising and posters to Jennifer Jones (Phylis Isley) to cash in on the famed star appearing in one of their serials.

Pichel was aided in his villainy by Walter Miller (Robal) and George Douglas (Sandoval). Miller had carved his own niche in serial history beginning with his silent serials (many of them directed by Spencer G. Bennet) continuing into the sound era as one of Universal's serial stock company, as well as the main villain of SECRET OF TREASURE ISLAND for Columbia in 1938 (see TEMI, pg. 177) — and ending with G-MEN. In a way, it was a demotion for Miller, who had usually played the "brains" of the villains or the chief heavy (in sound serials). But even in this almost subservient part, Miller gave his all.

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CHAPTER TITLES

1. The Master Spy	**8. Chamber of Doom**
2. Captured	**9. Flames of Jeopardy**
3. The False Signal	**10. Crackling Fury**
4. The Enemy Strikes	**11. Caverns of Peril**
5. Crack-Up!	**12. Fight in the Sky**
6. Sunken Peril	**13. The Fatal Ride**
7. Tracking the Enemy	**14. Getaway**

15. The Last Stand

●

DICK TRACY'S G-MEN begins with what could be termed a documentary of infamy. In a theater a newsreel is shown. The subject, as revealed by an off-screen commentator, is: "Zarnoff, the man without a country. Mystery figure of several nations. Master spy. For twenty years, although his name was linked with the most atrocious outrages against peaceful governments, nothing could be proven. Zarnoff! The most hated man on Earth. From where did he come? Where did he go? No one knew. His appearance in any country meant always trouble. His gigantic spy ring encircled the Earth. His agents were everywhere. Powerful, democratic America was not overlooked by Zarnoff.

"The parade of events gives you a re-enactment of Nicholas Zarnoff's capture. While crowds held back by police watched breathlessly, Dick Tracy and his G-men closed in on the arch criminal — trapped for the first time in his sinister career."

So what was unreeled would appear to be the end of the adventure, rather than the beginning. Fate, and good story telling, would have it the other way.

Zarnoff is executed at 12 o'clock Noon in the lethal gas chamber of a California prison. But when the police department morgue wagon takes off with the deceased, the wagon is intercepted and Zarnoff's body is removed to a van housing a fully equipped operating room. With the help of a resuscitator, two doctors are successful in bringing Zarnoff back to life.

Zarnoff bitterly assesses the situation: "I've cheated the law, outwitted the deadly science of the lethal chamber, but at a price no mortal man was ever expected to pay. That ancient drug was brewed by the alchemists of Satan. Tracy forced me to it. Tracy must die." [Note: The drug referred to had been added to printers' ink, then a newspaper was smuggled to Zarnoff (containing the ink) in his cell. He combined pieces of the paper with a cup of water and consumed the mixture. The drug kept gas from entering his lungs, tho his breathing and heart action temporarily stopped to fool the prison doctor into pronouncing him dead.]

Zarnoff resumes his diabolical spy activities with Dick Tracy in pursuit.

Zarnoff shows agents of the ***Three Powers*** (L. to R., Perry Ivins, Tristram Coffin, and ?) his remote control machine, equipped with a T.V. screen. Putting into play the machine's receiver, he intends to destroy the Great Industrial Canal. (1)

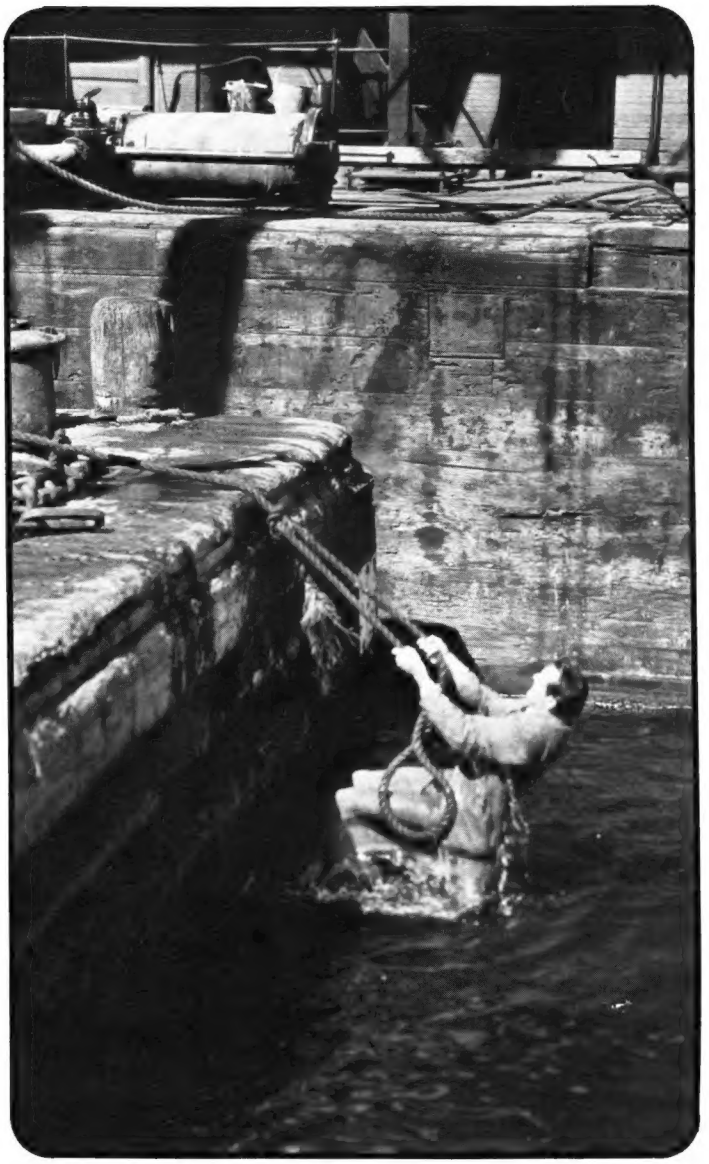
Dick Tracy is captured. Zarnoff offers him a painless death in exchange for the Frequency Code needed to decipher government messages. Looking on, with gun, is Robal (Walter Miller) and Sandoval (George Douglas). Using a gas filled fountain pen, Tracy creates a diversion and escapes. (2)

Learning of Zarnoff's plan to sabotage the Canal, Tracy and Steve head for the site. On Yaro Island, Zarnoff and his men stand by the Remote Control machine. Its receiver has been placed aboard a patrol boat laden with explosives, along with dummies dressed as security officers. Sandoval, by remote control, sends the speedboat on a collision course with the canal locks. Using a bi-plane with Steve piloting the craft, Tracy transfers to the boat. Zarnoff sees this on the T.V. screen and orders Sandoval to: "Blow it up! Blow it up! I'll get Tracy anyway!" Chapter one ends with a terrific explosion as the boat hits a cement wall. However, in Chapter two, Tracy grabs hold of the landing gear shaft of the plane before the explosion. (3)

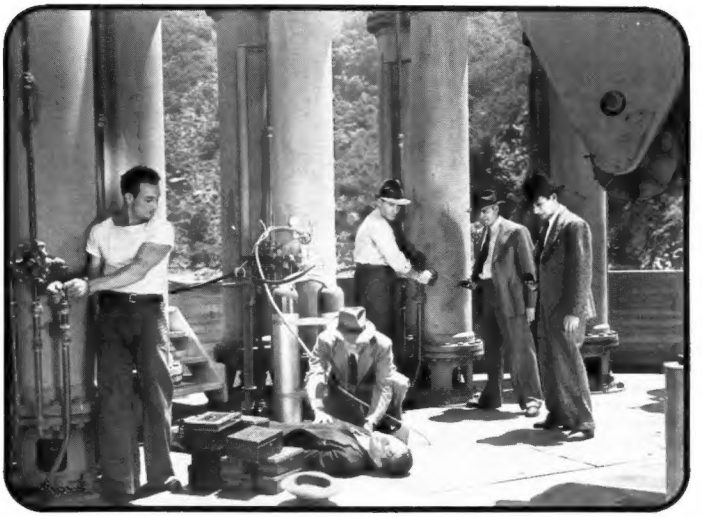
Tracy is again captured in Chapter two. His chair is nailed to the floor. A gun is set up to fire when the door is opened, thus Tracy will be eliminated by his own G-men when they return the fire. (Tracy cuts his bonds with a blade hidden in his ring, rolls out of the way before G-men riddle the door with bullets.) (4)

Zarnoff (Chapter four) directs two thugs (Joe McGuinn and Ken Terrell, on steps) in the assembly of his new trap: a time bomb connected to a pile of explosives, in the hold of a barge. [Note: This same timing apparatus can be seen on pgs. 101 and 188.] (5)

Tracy and Steve board the barge and manage to find the bomb and throw it out to sea just before it explodes. Later Tracy is knocked overboard between two barges. They swing together, apparently crushing a helpless Tracy. (6)



Tracy dives beneath the water surface and swims under one of the barges. Using a rope, he pulls himself aboard. (7)



Zarnoff keeps stolen records in an air pressurized diving bell hidden in an artificial lake at Norton Dam. Using a diver's helmet, Tracy descends and enters the bell. Up above, Robal shoots Steve. When Tracy attempts to surface, Robal shuts off his air source . . . flees with the documents. (8)

Seemingly doomed at the end of Chapter six as bubbles rise upwards from his diving helmet, Tracy manages to remove the helmet and swim into the bell. Later, he surfaces just as Steve regains consciousness from a slight wound to the head. (9)

The stolen documents are taken in Chapter seven to a sawmill and hidden in hollow lumber blocks. They are moved by truck before Tracy arrives. During a fight, Tracy is knocked out and a crane commences to lower a pile of lumber on him. The crane operator stops it at the last second. (10)

Zarnoff's most diabolical scheme unfolds in Chapter nine. He intends to sabotage the Pan Pacific Dirigible and eliminate a secret service man, James Robinson, on board, who is bringing vital information on spy activities to Tracy. Sandoval, Robal and Zarnoff demonstrate how the deed will be accomplished. A large balloon is sent skyward; a newsreel camera fires incendiary bullets at the target, shooting it down in flames. Bogus newsmen are to operate the camera at the airport.

The plan works (see cover). And Tracy and Robinson are blotted out of sight as a huge piece of flaming debris apparently falls on them. Moments later, the entire blazing dirigible crashes to Earth. [Note: Stock footage of the ill-fated Hindenberg is integrated into marvelous special-effect scenes done by Howard Lydecker.] (11)

The mass of flaming debris falls in front, not on, Tracy and Robinson. Next day, after the wreckage has cooled, a man in asbestos suit retrives Robinson's papers, protected by a metal, fireproof box. Zarnoff's "newsreel" men strike! Two officers and the searcher are shot by the gun-camera. In attempting to flee, the cameramen are, in turn, shot. (12)

The box of vital papers is saved, tho they prove to be in a code only Zarnoff knows. Eventually the code is broken and the master spy is traced to an old smelter plant (in Chapter ten). (13)
[Above: Gwen (Phylis Isley); Steve (Ted Pearson); Dick Tracy.]

Robal and Zarnoff, at the smelter, plan a booby trap for anyone entering the plant without their approval. Dick Tracy and Steve set foot into the trap and are almost cremated. (14)

Thru a ruse, Dick, Clive Anderson (his superior), and Steve enter a cab that is in reality a specially rigged Zarnoff vehicle. Steel shutters slide over all the windows; the doors are locked. Exhaust gas pours into the passenger compartment. All succumb to the fumes as Chapter 13 ends. [Note: Anderson is played by Kenneth Harlan.] (15)

The kidnapped trio is taken to Zarnoff's hideout. Tracy overhears Zarnoff's scheme to secretly make photostatic copies of the plans for an aerial torpedo. Using Sandoval's cigaret lighter, Tracy burns his bonds . . . pursues Zarnoff to the home of the torpedo's inventor in one of the spy's own cars. (16)

Tracy chases Zarnoff and Robal as they flee with the plans in a station wagon. As Tracy gains, Zarnoff sends black smoke emitting from the wagon's exhaust system. The detective's vision is obscured and he crashes thru a guard rail and down an embankment. Two policemen come to his aid. (17)

Airborne in the final episode, Tracy and his prisoner, Zarnoff, are forced to land in the desert. After a grueling trek, they find an oasis. Zarnoff bests Tracy and handcuffs him to a tree, then drinks from a water hole. Ironically it is poisoned with arsenic. Tracy uses a tin plate to signal Steve, in a plane, his location. THE END. (18)

POSTSCRIPT

An early shooting script for DICK TRACY'S G-MEN (entitled "Dick Tracy and His G-Men") ends with the death of Zarnoff, while the movie, as released, has an added scene where Tracy is promoted to Assistant Director of the F.B.I.

Also, the shooting script resolution for Chapter two, and as described in Chapter three (see pg. 252, photo no. 4) reads as follows: "There is a terrific bombardment as the boys outside the door cut loose their broadside, and a hail of bullets riddles the chair in which Tracy was just seated. Splinters fly in all directions, and we see that had Tracy delayed another second, he would have been thoroughly killed." ***Thoroughly killed??!!***

Climax of Chapter five has Tracy, in a plane, making a desperate gamble to stop a train carrying gold headed for certain disaster, since Zarnoff's men have removed a piece of rail track. He flies by the train, signaling to the engineer. His airship goes out of control when one wing hits a post, and crashes. Republic's shooting script called for part of this sequence to be stock footage from the 1934 TAILSPIN TOMMY (Chapter eleven), produced by their biggest competitor, Universal Pictures!!

Unhappily the re-issue pressbook, in 1955, ran a publicity article suggested for exhibitors' use in the local papers. It said, in part and in the present tense, "Pichel is one of the best liked men in films and is a constant companion of Byrd's on the golf course." Impossible, since Byrd died in 1952 and Pichel in 1954.

In TEMI, page 37, the editor commented that DICK TRACY ('37) should rank second in entertainment behind DICK TRACY VS. CRIME, INC., yet to be reported. Second thoughts on this statement call for a retraction. G-Men deserves ***second place***, RETURNS third position, and the first release moved to the bottom of the list. However, Chapter two of the original Tracy serial contains spectacular photography, particularly during the Sierra Power House sequence, plus special effects tricks concerning aircraft created by Howard Lydecker that, in the main, defy detection. Combined, they make the episode as good, or better, than anything offered in the three Tracy serials that followed.

MEN OF ACTION

Story and Photos / D. VICTOREK

DAVE O'BRIEN was born on May 31, 1912, in Big Spring, Texas. Real name David Poole Fronabarger, he was the second of three children born to Mary Edith and Michael Fronaberger. While Dave was very young, his parents separated and Mary Edith took the three children to live in El Paso, while Michael settled in Abilene. At the finish of his schooling, Dave began his show business career on the stage of the Queen Theatre in Abilene, performing an adagio dance with Ima Jean Anderson. From this early start he worked his way up to appearing in plays on the stage of the Texas Grande Theatre in El Paso.

In May 1928, Dave gravitated to Los Angeles, where he took employment as a pipe fitter while seeking work in stage shows. After success in a few shows, he obtained a "bit" in his first film, a 1929 Eddie Lambert comedy short (title of which still remains unknown).

Continuing to work as a "bit" player, he appeared in his first feature "Dawn Patrol", (F.N., 1930). After a number of roles as a "bit" player and dancer, he gained his first big speaking role in 1933, playing the brother, in the Paramount film classic, "Jennie Gerhardt."

Between acting roles he supplemented his income by working as a singer in cafes, a model for magazine ads, and appearing on radio shows. By the mid-30's film acting jobs were becoming more frequent, and he was now receiving credited roles. His big break came in 1936 when Stage & Screen cast him in a starring role with Ralph Graves and Ruth Mix in the serial THE BLACK COIN (pg. 113). The ability to perform his own stunt work, and that of other actors, landed him an uncredited role in Universal's serial, THE ADVENTURES OF FRANK MERRIWELL. A reliable source says, "Don Briggs remembered Dave doing three or four roles in the serial."

Climatic moment of Chapter two THE BLACK COIN where Dave O'Brien is shanghaied aboard ship to be placed in canvas bag and thrown overboard.

Established as an actor and with a steady income, Dave married (in 1936) Dorothy Marie Short, a young actress he met while the two were working as "bit" players. The couple had two children. It was around this time Dave decided to legally take the name David Barclay and use O'Brien for a stage name. Origin or reason he chose "O'Brien" remains a mystery.

Dave O'Brien and his first wife, Dorothy Marie Short, as they appeared in CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT (1942). Short also starred in THE CALL OF THE SAVAGE (1935), page 76.

Also in 1936 Dave appeared in "Tell Your Children." Re-released the film was variously identified as "The Burning Question", "Reefer Madness", "Dope Addict" and "Doped Youth." The feature exploited the use of marijuana among high school students. Dave played an older dope addict, infatuated with a young school girl (enacted by Dorothy Short). Under the influence of marijuana he rapes the girl and in a scuffle with the girl's brother and Jack, the dope peddler, a gun is accidentally fired, killing the girl. Later in a rage, and out of his mind from the effects of marijuana, Dave kills the dope peddler and is adjudged hopelessly insane. Clips from this film were used in the making of "Weed", a history of marijuana and released for TV in December, 1970, but has not yet had an air date. More recently, "Variety" newspaper reported on 8/9/1972 that "Reefer Madness" was revived at the Bleeker Street Cinema in New York. The article went on to say the film is now played for laughs rather than with the original serious intent of exploiting dope addiction among juveniles.

In 1937, Dave returned to the clean cut roles he is best known for. He began appearing in westerns with some of the all-time greats of the era: Tim McCoy, Tom Tyler, Jack Randall, John Wayne, Bob Steele, etc. In a no-credit role, he played a counterfeiter in "Renfrew of the Royal Mounted" (G.N.) and worked his way up to second male lead opposite James Newill in the series. Next came work in several other series which ran into the '40's: "East Side Kids", "Billy the Kid" (Buster Crabbe), "Rough Rider" and his own "Texas Ranger."

More serials were added to his credits with THE SECRET OF TREASURE ISLAND (Col., 1938), in which he had a feature role and doubled for others. [Author's note: I've heard he is listed on the cast sheets for the early '38 Columbia serial THE MYSTERIOUS PILOT, pg. 161, but have been unable to learn more about this role. Perhaps a reader may have information on it that he will kindly share with us.] Unvarified is the fact that he did stunt work in THE SPIDER'S WEB (Col., 1938). 1941 added the Universal serial SKY RAIDERS to his credits when he stunted in fight scenes for Donald Woods. THE SPIDER RETURNS for Columbia returned him to a chief supporting role with Warren Hull, and in 1942 he starred in Columbia's CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT.

Dave O'Brien as CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT.

About this time he had worked in an airline promotional film "Flight Plan", produced and directed by Will Jason. The two became good friends. Jason, working as a director for Pete Smith, brought Dave to the producer's attention and Pete tried the actor in one of his famous short subjects, a Pete Smith Specialty, entitled "What About Daddy?" and was very pleased with Dave's work. Dave continually amazed Pete with his skill. It wasn't long before he became Pete's right arm, working not only as an actor, but behind the scenes engineering the stunts he performed in the shorts. Dave had an excellent mechanical mind and worked out the gag devices used in the films.

As they say, "Meanwhile, back at the corral," James Newill, Dave's co-star in the "Texas Ranger" series, left to return to opera and the stage. In 1944, PRC then signed Tex Ritter to co-star with Dave until the series ended late in '45. PRC made an unsuccessful attempt to remove Dave from the saddle by starring him in two non-westerns, "The Man Who Walked Alone" and "The Phantom of 42nd Street" (with serial star Kay Aldridge). This ended Dave's career at PRC. Pete Smith took advantage of the fact and signed him to a three-way contract calling for Dave to act, write and direct the "Specialties." In 1950 Pete Smith and Dave were called to Washington, D.C., to meet President Truman at the White House. Here both were presented with awards for their work in promoting Industrial Safety. The film that won them the award was "Wrong Way Butch", a safety film depicting how accidents happen and could be avoided in industry.

Dave O'Brien and Pete Smith.

In 1953 Dave's marriage of seventeen years to Dorothy Short ended in divorce. Later, he met and married Nancy Lee Lister. The couple had three children (two boys and a girl). During these years he worked in a few M-G-M features including "Kiss Me Kate" and "Tennessee Champ", at Universal in "The Kettles In The Ozarks," and Fox's "Desperados Are In Town".

With Pete Smith's retirement anticipated, Dave turned to TV, writing, directing and acting in pilot films for CBS. By 1955, when the "Specialties" ended, he was working for Red Skelton as actor, "double" and writer on the comedian's TV show. Dave was co-innovator with Skelton of the comedian's "Silent Spot" that pantomined the amusing aspects of several stations in life. At the time the idea of a silent televised sketch was an extreme risk. O'Brien's background in the profession, plus experience with Pete Smith, gave him the ability to recognize the possibilities of such a feature. The "Silent Spot" remained a part of the show until its cancellation. In 1961, Dave won an "Emmy" award for outstanding writing in comedy on the "Red Skelton TV Show."

Sailing had caught Dave's fancy early, and he purchased a 60-foot cutter, the "White Cloud," which he often entered in competition. He entered the 1965 "Transpac" and came in eleventh, out of 55 yachts competing in the race. In 1967 he won a cup for the Ensenada race; and on November 8, 1969, he and his eldest son, Jib, entered the "Fletcher Memorial" race to Santa Catalina. He won the race and while still aboard the "White Cloud" in Avalon Harbor, he was stricken with a heart attack. A call for help was sent out to the Isthmus, and two men were dispatched in a skiff to pick Dave up. They took him out to sea where he was placed in a basket and picked up by a Coast Guard helicopter and flown into Harbor General Hospital at Torrance, where he died. He was cremated, and his ashes scattered at sea from the deck of the "White Cloud." [See related story on page 135.]

In 1968, when asked about his thoughts on his career, it was as if he suspected he did not have long to live. He replied: "It's been a full, enjoyable life — wouldn't have it any other way."

CHAPTER TITLES

1. **Death Rides the Air**
2. **Avalanche of Doom**
3. **Trapped By Indians**
4. **River of Doom**
5. **Descending Doom**
6. **Ghost Town Menace**
7. **Destroyed By Dynamite**
8. **Thundering Hoofs**
9. **The Fire Gods Strike**
10. **The Battle of Ghost Town**
11. **Hurtling Through Space**
12. **The Boy Scouts Triumph**

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Those who witnessed the concluding chapter of RED BARRY (pg. 222) on one Saturday, and returned the following week to "see the first episode of Universal's thrilling and colorful new 12-chapter serial drama," SCOUTS TO THE RESCUE, received a decided jolt. William Ruhl had been the principal villain in BARRY; however, he showed up in SCOUTS as a G-man and, aside from teenager Jackie Cooper as an Eagle Scout, served nicely as the principal hero thru-out the serial.

The original story came from Irving Crump, Managing Editor of "Boys' Life" magazine. Wyndham Gittens, George Plympton, Basil Dickey and Joseph Poland adapted it into a chapter play.

SCOUTS had lush scenery — the Sierra Nevada mountains near Sonora, California — to make plausible the absurdity that a lost branch of Inca Indians (savages) could exist undetected, in 1939, in the High Sierras.

Bruce Scott (Jackie Cooper), leader of Martinsville's Troop Number One, and his pack set off in search of lost treasure, using a map provided by Tenderfoot Skeets Scanlon. (Scoutmaster Hale, chaperon to the troop, is conveniently excused from the expedition early when he rushes back to an ailing wife.) The map leads them to Ghost Town, and the "treasure" turns out to be a large cache of counterfeit $20 bills, plus the copper plates used to print them.

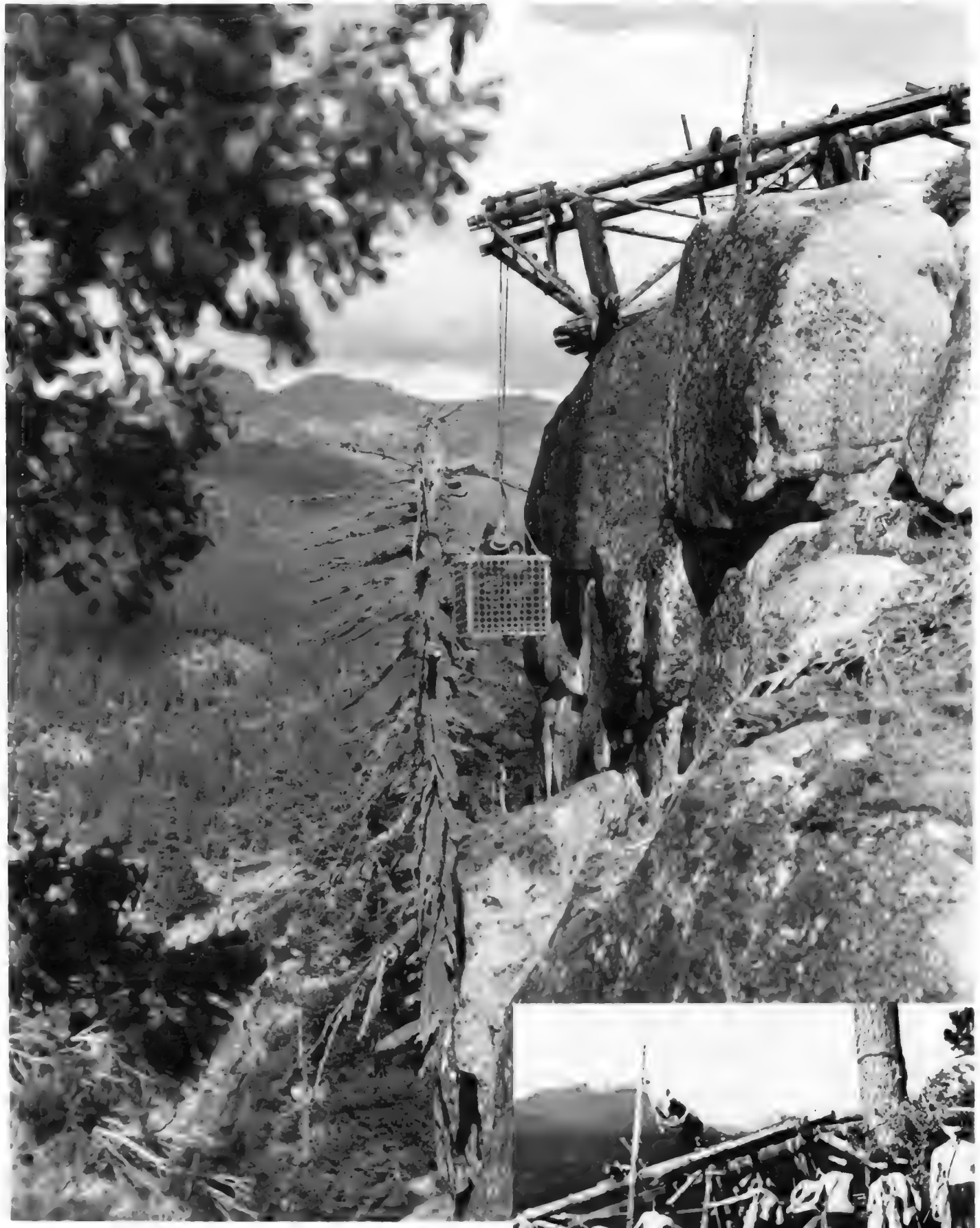
Joining the Scouts in Chapter two is G-man Hal Marvin (William Ruhl), who not only helps them do battle with the Indians, but also a ring of counterfeiters (which includes Jason Robards and Ralph Dunn). Allegedly involved with the gang is Pat Scanlon, Skeet's father (Edwin Stanley).

Prior to departing for Ghost Town, Bruce has a fistfight with Martinsville's "bad boy," Rip Rawson (David Durand). Rip eventually throws in his lot with the counterfeiters, mends his ways, and becomes a Scout.

Reason for the Indians ferocious efforts to keep white men from their Temple cave is that it contains a huge and valuable radium deposit. (This did not hold up to reason, since they know its medicinal value, "ability to heal wounds," but certainly not its monetary value.) Eventual fate of the Indians is left to conjecture; fate of the counterfeiting ring is capture.

L. to R., foreground: Skeets Scanlon (Bill Cody, Jr.), who found the "treasure" map; Bruce Scott (Jackie Cooper); Ken (Frank Coghlan,Jr.) and Hermie (Sidney Miller).

Mary Scanlon, Skeet's sister (Vondell Darr), later joins the Scout Troop at Ghost Town. She, Bruce and Ken set out by canoe in Chapter four to rescue Skeets from the Indians. They are swept toward a roaring cataract that seems to spell their doom. (However, thru skillful handling of the canoe, they win their battle against the treacherous current.)



G-man Hal Marvin and Bruce rescue Skeets in Chapter five. Chased, the three take refuge in a basket elevator . . . only to have Leeka (Richard Botilier) cut the rope that holds the basket, sending the trio crashing into a great gorge. (Fortunately, a giant tree breaks the fall of the elevator.)

A COLUMBIA SERIAL

MANDRAKE, THE MAGICIAN

Directed by Sam Nelson/ Norman Deming

Based on the King Features newspaper character created by Lee Falk and Phil Davis.

Released in 1939

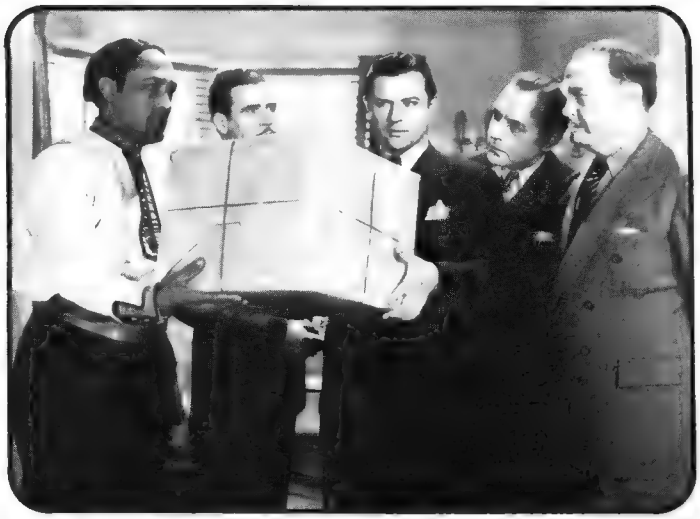
CHAPTER TITLES

1. Shadow on the Wall
2. Trap of the Wasp
3. Cry of Terror
4. The Secret Passage
5. The Devil's Playmate
6. The Fatal Crash
7. Gamble for Life
8. Across the Deadline
9. Terror Rides the Rails
10. The Unseen Monster
11. At the Stroke of Eight
12. The Reward of Treachery

Photos and Captions / JAMES A. STRINGHAM

In Columbia's first serial adaptation of a comic strip, King Features' popular magician was brought to life in the person of Warren Hull. For twelve episodes Mandrake battled ***The Wasp*** for control of the "radium energy machine" invented by a Professor Houston. (1)

The Wasp is aware that Houston's machine, designed for medical treatment, can also be used as a deadly weapon of destruction. Learning that Mandrake is returning from Tibet with the formula of a platonite/steel alloy needed to perfect the device, he orders his men to kidnap Houston and his prototype model. (2)



Mandrake escapes an ambush and saves Houston, but the inventor and his machine are later captured. Lothar (Al Kikume) and Mandrake are joined by electrical engineer James Webster (Kenneth MacDonald), Dr. Andre Bennett (Edward Earle) who hopes to use the machine at his clinic, and Raymond (Don Beddoe) a fellow magician. Raymond provides the apparatus (in case) to terrify a captured heavy, but ***Wasp*** henchmen murder him before he can talk. (3)

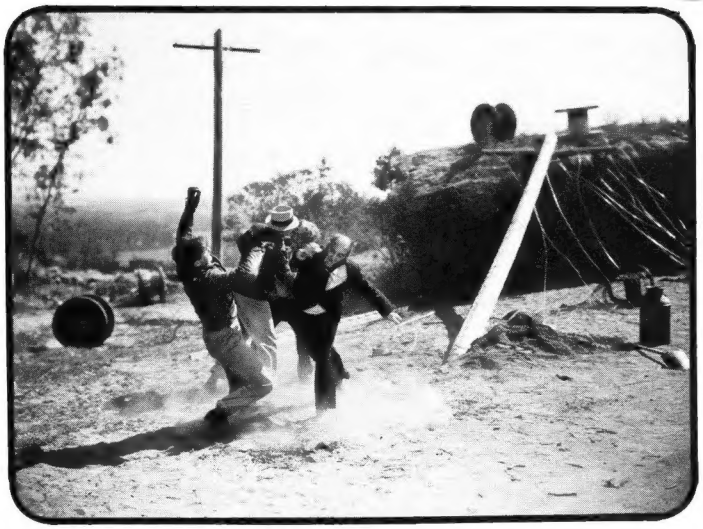
Mandrake "leaks" information that he possesses platonite and allows himself to be captured. He hears that ***The Wasp*** plans to intimidate Houston by threatening his daughter Betty (Doris Weston). He escapes and races to a radio station where the girl has been lured as the radium machine is activated. The station is destroyed, but Mandrake and Lothar extricate Betty from the debris. (4)

The Wasp selects the Interstate Power Company as his next target. Mandrake learns of the attack, but is captured and tied to the main switchboard of the doomed plant. He frees himself and escapes as the radium beam destroys the building. (5)

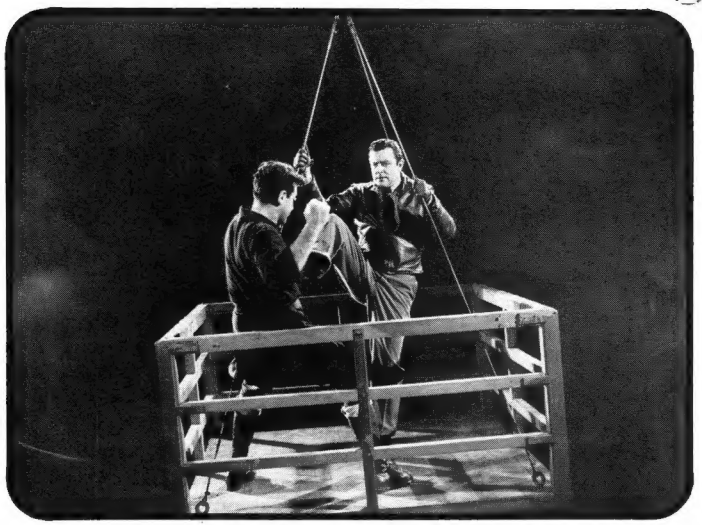
Houston electrocutes a guard, then reaches a short wave transmitter and contacts his son, Tommy, and Mandrake at his home. ***The Wasp's*** men, watching the building, attack, but Mandrake fights them off. (6)

Knowing that Houston is being taken to the Dorgan Foundry, located some fifty miles away, Mandrake plans to fly out ahead of gangsters. He is ambushed at the airport, but takes off after a fight. A ***Wasp*** plane has been alerted, however, and, as Houston escapes from the foundry, he sees Mandrake's ship shot down in flames. (7)

Mandrake parachutes to safety. He joins Houston, and the two escape ***Wasp*** guards as Lothar drives up. At home, Houston (Forbes Murray) immediately begins work on a new radium machine constructed of the platonite/steel alloy, and attempts to create a device which will nullify its destructive properties. (8)



Mandrake has located platonite on land owned by the Suburban Telephone Company and secured mineral rights from them, but ***The Wasp*** learns of this by a telephone tap. The phone company men are attacked, but one escapes to warn Mandrake . . . (9)



. . . who rushes up with Lothar and Webster. Mandrake chases one heavy onto a cable car which is torn loose in the resulting battle. He grabs a hanging cable, then returns to help drive off the remaining gangsters. (10)

Houston prepares to complete and demonstrate his nullifier at Mandrake's home "at the stroke of eight." Webster, Bennett, and Raymond are present. Someone removes a part of the nullifier as, elsewhere, a pre-set timer activates ***The Wasp's*** radium machine. The group rushes out as the building collapses around them. Dr. Bennett is injured, but Raymond, Tommy (Rex Downing), and Mandrake save him. (11)

They separate. Mandrake and Lothar search an area where a Wasp man disappeared and find the entrance to his headquarters. Mandrake eludes a death trap and faces ***The Wasp:*** Dr. Andre Bennett. Bennett escapes, but Mandrake and Lothar pursue. Mandrake shoots out a tire to send ***The Wasp's*** car crashing to destruction. Later, Houston is honored for creating the radium machine and the nullifier which renders it harmless. THE END.

●

The MANDRAKE comic strip is still appearing in newspapers, and presently bears the signatures of (Lee) Falk and (Fred) Fredericks.

OVERLAND WITH KIT CARSON, Columbia's third and last serial release in 1939, followed MANDRAKE. Extensive coverage has already been given to OVERLAND, starting on page 146.

THOSE ENDURING SERIAL FANS

Letters from TEMI fans are most welcome. However, the information supplied in these columns by readers is based on their opinions. The editor does not necessarily purport the info to be complete, exact or accurate.

ADDENDA

The unidentified henchman in both stills from RED BARRY on page 223 is James Sheridan, predominantly a Western player. The outlaw on top of the stagecoach with Bill Elliott on page 227 is Art (George Kesterson) Mix. Fred "Snowflake" Toones appears on page 237 in scene 13 with the Daredevils of the Red Circle. Duke Green (doubling Kenne Duncan) is the man putting the heat on Tom Steele on page 245, lower left.

As you put the finishing touches on the third year of publication let me again offer my congratulations on the superb job you have been doing. I continue to hungrily await each new Chapter.

Wayne Campbell
Memphis, Tenn.

Editor's Note: Thank you.

* * *

COINCIDENCE

In Redwood City, Calif., the Navy Recruiter is located on Winslow Street.

Ron Stephenson
San Francisco

For awhile there really was a KING OF THE TEXAS RANGERS. The Texas Rangers baseball team in the American League had a catcher by the name of Hal King. Alas, King was recently sent to the minor leagues.

Charles McCleary
Los Angeles

* * *

TARZAN, AN ENIGMA

Regarding THE SON OF TARZAN, a serial filmed and released in 1920. All reference books provide this information, but do not list the fact the serial was cut down to 12 episodes (from the original 15) and re-issued in 1929 or '30 with an added synchronized score during the credits, and a narrator explaining what had previously transpired. He was dressed in a jungle trader outfit, and gave the continuity in a sing-song poetic reading style. I'm sure I saw this serial in its entirety (in 1930). Recently I obtained a two reel, 8 MM version, and recognized many of the scenes. Could some reader substantiate the fact it was indeed re-issued.

Many books state that THE ADVENTURES OF TARZAN, filmed in 1921, was recut and re-issued both as a feature and a 10 episode serial in 1928 with synchronized sound effects. This is true. But is the same true of THE SON OF TARZAN?

Ed Billings
Nashua, N.H.

* * *

TOM NEAL, shown above kneeling over Ken Terrell in Republic's JUNGLE GIRL, 1941, was Frances Gifford's leading man in the serial. Later he starred in BRUCE GENTRY (Col., '49). Neal died, at 59, of an apparent heart attack on August 7, 1972. He was released from prison only last December after serving six years of a one-to-10 year sentence for "involuntary manslaughter" of his third wife.

MORE MUSIC APPRECIATION

In the various lists of "Serial Alumni Who Made Good," I have yet to see the name of CY FEUER. Mr. Feuer is credited with the music for eight serials produced by Republic Pictures in 1940 and 1941. These included DRUMS OF FU MANCHU, MYSTERIOUS DR. SATAN and ADVS. OF CAPTAIN MARVEL. He was at one time head of Republic's music department, then went on to co-produce (with Ernest Martin) a number of successful musicals on Broadway including "Guys and Dolls", "Can-Can", and "How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying." He won two New York Drama Critics Circle Awards, and "Succeed" won the Pulitzer Prize for drama.

Mr. Feuer's current production is the movie (his first) "Cabaret", which has received generally sensational reviews. Interestingly, Raoul Kraushaar is the film's Music Coordinator — and who prior was credited with "Musical Score By" for two 1937 Republic serials, THE PAINTED STALLION and SOS COAST GUARD, only to return nine years later and receive the same credit for KING OF THE FOREST RANGERS and DAUGHTER OF DON Q in 1946.

Will Hamblet
Santa Monica, Calif.

* * *

AMUSING DIALOGUE

Here are three more amusing lines of serial dialogue, delivered in each case by the villain of the piece:

"Now that I have deprived you (Dale Arden) of your loved one, it is only fitting that I should take his place!" — Charles Middleton in FLASH GORDON CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE.

"You know, Davis, one of these days you're gonna wake up and find a lily in your hand!" — Charles Bickford in RIDERS OF DEATH VALLEY.

"I hardly like to think of my cafe as a place where psychopaths come to commit suicide!" — Lyle Talbot in THE VIGILANTE.

Harold Seacombe
London, England

* * *

EDITOR'S NOTES

Received an advance copy of "The Great Movie Serials" from the authors Jim Harmon and Don Glut too late to thoroughly read, and digest, prior to presstime. It's a thick 384 pages with a welcomed index, and contains 32 illustrations.

I'm here to tell you these gentlemen worked hard. Oh, there are goofs, but most I've uncovered are not Earth-shaking. What makes the book, in my opinion, choice reading is the writing style, which is fresh and vigorous. Interspersed are passages from shooting scripts (or scenes described from the serials concerned) that lend a pleasant air of authenticity.

Unhappily the writers picked up a couple of errors that appeared in TEMI. (1) On page 14, Chapter two, we said Hobart Bosworth played Chingachgook in THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS. This was corrected on page 144. For the serial, the book character's name was changed to "The Sagamore." (2) Concerning MYSTERY MOUNTAIN (page 29, Chapter three) we quoted Jane Corwin as saying: "Look! His rump is caught in the rock." It should have been "rope," not rump.

(Continued on next page.)

TEMI / EDITOR & PUBLISHER • ROBERT M. MALCOMSON
CHIEF – ILLUSTRATIONS DIVISION • JAMES A. STRINGHAM

(Continued from page 263.)

So much for that. There is a wide difference between trying hard (and still committing an error on occasion), and being consistently sloppy in reporting (as in the case of the book "To Be Continued . . .", page 247). Harmon/Glut took on a gigantic task. "The Great Movie Serials" would seem on first scanning to be worth the research, writing and "sweat" the authors obviously put into it. ***Buy it.***

* * *

▲ ***THIRD ANNIVERSARY for TEMI.*** This chapter is dedicated to our pen-pal ***LUCILE BROWNE*** (above, in DANGER ISLAND, 1931).

Far left in photo is Andy Devine. Next to him is Kenneth Harlan, male lead in the Universal serial, and wearing the white cap is Walter Miller, chief heavy. Behind Miller is William Thorne.

Ironically both Harlan and Miller appeared in minor supporting roles in DICK TRACY'S G-MEN.

SUBSCRIPTION INFO

TO SUBSCRIBE for six issues (one year): $5.00 U.S.A. and Canada; and, $6.00 elsewhere. Mailed 3rd Class. Publication is bi-monthly. Single copies of current issue are $1.00. Back issues, $2.00 each. WHEN SUBSCRIBING, please make your money order or check payable to ROBERT MALCOMSON, 38559 ASBURY PARK DRIVE, MT. CLEMENS, MICHIGAN 48043.

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HOUSTONCON (June 21-24, 1973) is rapidly firming up its program with an eye to the cravings of serial enthusiasts. Coincidently, DICK TRACY'S G-MEN will be shown in its entirety, as will be PERILS OF NYOKA, plus the feature version of THE MASKED MARVEL. That's only part of the fare. Write Earl Blair, Jr., 2511 Pennington Street, Houston, Texas 77016 for further information.

* * *

The first WESTERN FILM COLLECTORS Convention was held in Memphis, Tenn., during August. Tho this editor could not be present, it's been learned from many who did attend that the affair was well managed . . . and the excellent program included a fat quota of serials — even episodes from THE LONE RANGER, 1938. TEMI will keep you posted on their 1973 plans as information becomes available.

WANTED: 16 MM features of Hopalong Cassidy, Durango Kid, Lash LaRue. In TV Programs: Rin-Tin-Tin and Sheena. In Serials, "The Phantom", "The Green Hornet", "Blackhawk", "Superman", "Advs. of Capt. Marvel" and "King of the Royal Mounted". Also want one-sheets pertaining to above. Send list and prices to AL BOIVIN, P.O. Box 136, Thamesville, Ontario, Canada.

SERIAL MATERIAL FOR SALE. One sheets: "Blackhawk" (autographed by Kirk Alyn) - $25; "King of the Carnival" - $8; "Blazing the Overland Trail" - $10; "The Lost Planet" - $15; "Cody of the Pony Express" - $10; "Wild Bill Hickok (Re-issue)" - $6; "Mystery Mountain" - $25; "King of the Royal Mounted" - $25. Pressbook: "Dangers of Canadian Mounted" - $10. Also, "Screen Thrills Illustrated" No. 1 - No. 10 (Mint) - $75. ED GREGOIRE, 37 Eastside Circle, Petaluma, Calif. 94953.

WANTED: SERIAL ONE-SHEETS

Stock or individual chapter posters from *Zorro Rides Again, Fighting Devil Dogs, Hawk of the Wilderness, Daredevils of the Red Circle, Zorro's Fighting Legion, Drums of Fu Manchu, Adv. of Captain Marvel, Jungle Girl, Perils of Nyoka, The Tiger Woman, Zorro's Black Whip, Federal Operator 99, The Purple Monster Strikes, The Phantom Rider, King of the Forest Rangers, Daughter of Don Q, The Crimson Ghost* and *Son of Zorro*. Foregoing are all Republic serials. Also desire one-sheets from *Mystery Mountain* and *Phantom of the West* (Mascot); *Battling with Buffalo Bill* and *Clancy of the Mounted* (Universal). Will pay cash or exchange serial material or serial scripts for these items. THE CLIFFHANGERS CLUB, 5419 S. Cornell Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60615.

WANTED: INFORMATION on present addresses, if living, of Buddy Roosevelt, Ted Wells, Jay Wilsey (Buffalo Bill, Jr.), Bob Baker, Fred Scott, Wally Wales (Hal Taliaferro), Reb Russell, Al Hoxie, Fred Humes, and Frankie Darro. Contact needed for preparation of article on old-time Western stars. Write: Dr. BILL RAINEY, East Central State College, Ada, Oklahoma 74820.

WANTED: 16 MM sound serial, ADVENTURES OF RED RYDER (Republic), starring Don Barry. Prefer 16 MM but will consider 35 MM safety print of same. Also want 16 MM western features. Write: WAYNE LACKEY, 4083 Westmont, Memphis, Tenn. 38109 — or call (901) 785-5012.

THE GREAT MOVIE SERIALS by Jim Harmon & Don Glut with foreward by Kirk Alyn, 384 pages, 32 illustrations, indexed, $7.95 postpaid. A descriptive book about sound serials to be read, not primarily a listing of credits, etc. Copies autographed by Harmon on request. JIM HARMON, P.O. Box 38612, Hollywood, California 90038.

713 SERIAL LOBBY CARDS for sale, or will trade for early M-G-M and Warner Brothers paper. Send stamped self-addressed envelope for list. HOWARD ADAMS, 5313 W. 94th Street, Los Angeles, California 90045.

VIDEO TAPED! Republic science fiction serials ("Radar Men from the Moon" and others) available on ½ inch standardized tape. Write: GORDON GENTRY, JR., Rt. 2, Box 1304, Camas, Washington 98607.

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